

THE BELLEVILLE 'TORPEDO'

1-7-63

What does the future hold for the Belleville 'Torpedo'?

By MANUEL CASTRO
Of The Press Staff

BELLEVILLE — The Belleville "Torpedo" may go on the auction block after tonight's City Council meeting.

The "Torpedo", a 1923 Brockway-LaFrance fire truck, may be the victim of high insurance costs. Belleville is paying \$57 a year to insure the old pumper, even though she hasn't been operational for the last five years.

Tonight the council will probably decide whether the veteran pumper will be kept in a place of honor or sold to the highest bidder.

Locked securely in the Fire Department garage, the once-shining red Torpedo was purchased new by the city in 1923. Now, the former pride of the Belleville fire-eaters is dust-covered and neglected. Her wood-spoke tires are flat and the suction hoses she carries are becoming cracked and split with age.

The new trucks of the fleet frown down on her dilapidated condition.

Her last great fire was in 1952 when flames swept Belleville High School. The Torpedo pumped water continuously along with 13 other pieces of more modern equipment for many arduous hours. She functioned perfectly without the slightest breakdown. After that, it was a series of small fires, until the 500-gallon pumper was eventually retired from active service.

But even though the Torpedo has seen her last days "on the line," Fire Chief Clarence M. Artley still doesn't want to see her leave the department.

"There's still a lot of life in the old war horse," Artley observes. "With a new battery and a tune-up, she'd be ready to take the road again. I do, however, agree she should be retired from active service, but I think the city should keep the pumper as an antique."

"The Torpedo grew up with the City, and it would be a crime to get rid of her now."

Chief Artley said a salesman from the American-LaFrance Corp. which still manufactures fire trucks, told him the pumper was the fifth or sixth oldest piece of equipment owned by a city in the state.

"Not only that," the chief continued, "the Torpedo is the first real motorized water pressure unit Belleville had. Before she was purchased all we had was a chemical unit mounted on a Model T. It was a vast improvement for the day."

The pumper, which hasn't been run in the last year and a half, cost \$5,000 in 1923. An equivalent unit today runs \$22,000, Artley said.

"Basically the new models are the same engine brought up to date. They really haven't changed much," Artley continued.

The four-cylinder Torpedo has only 231.44 actual miles on her speedometer and could probably still make a respectable 50 miles an hour, he said.

"However, the speedometer is misleading and really doesn't show the actual service the Torpedo has had. The strain on the engine is primarily from pumping water and not road miles. I'd estimate she has at least 15,000 miles on her," he said.

Although the old pumper's days may be numbered in Belleville, she will not be entirely forgotten. The eagle-topped brass bell that clanged on the way to a hundred forgotten fires has a new place of honor. It has been rechromed and sits on the left fender of the newest LaFrance truck in the fleet—still able to make a mighty big sound when needed.



BELLEVILLE FIRE CHIEF Clarence M. Artley shows Irwin W. Stech, city clerk and police chief, that the controls of the city's 1923 Brockway-LaFrance pumper are still in good working order.

—Press Photo



THESE YOUNG lassies pose beside the towering 17½-foot snowman of Roddy Stuart, 16, of Aberdeen, Scotland. Judging from the rakish angle of the cold colossus, Roddy is influenced by the Italian architecture of the Pisa region. (UPI Telephoto)

People in the news

By The Associated Press

Francis Cardinal Spellman, in Berlin for a two-day visit with American troops, prayed at the Red wall for victims of communism.

The 73-year-old archbishop of New York told newsmen: "It is always an emotional experience to gaze upon this wall. I pray that in a period of time, given good sense, fairness and justice,

we can have peace in this great city."

Former Presidents Harry S. Truman and Miguel Aleman of Mexico have renewed a friendship they began as chiefs of state 18 years ago.

At Independence, Mo., Truman conducted Aleman on a tour of the Truman Memorial Library, then entertained Aleman and others at luncheon.

The meeting was part of a two-day salute to Mexico sponsored by the People to People program,

which has headquarters at Kansas City, Mo. The program is aimed at promoting international goodwill through closer contacts among private citizens of the various nations.

KNAPP SHOES

MAX HAMMOND

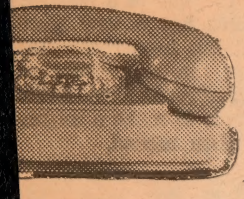
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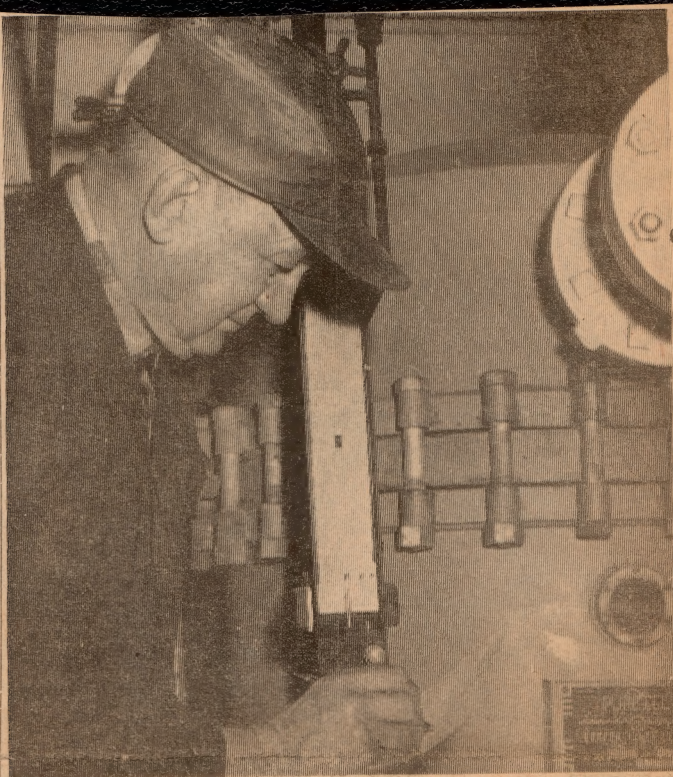
FOR CUSHIONED COMFORT



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A FULL DAY'S work is ahead for Belleville Water Department Superintendent Reginald G. Atyeo as he checks gauges on water filtration machinery. Mr. Atyeo, 71, has headed the Water Department since 1932. —Press Photo

Only tower climb slows Belleville water boss

By MANUEL CASTRO
Of The Press Staff

BELLEVILLE — Reginald Atyeo looked up at the 100-foot water tower on the shores of wind-swept Belleville Lake and said "I don't think I'll climb it again."

This is one of the few concessions the superintendent of the Belleville Water Department gives to his 71 years. Mr. Atyeo, who is responsible for maintaining the city's entire water system, doesn't believe in sitting around in a rocking chair.

"When I first came to work for the city in 1932 I had to do all the Water Department work and keep the streets repaired. So things are much easier around here now," he said.

"As to the water tower, many a time I climbed up there and cleaned it out, but now that's for

younger men who haven't had a chance to prove themselves."

The son of a Sumpter Township farmer, Mr. Atyeo puts in an eight-hour day and is on 24-hour emergency call. He knows almost every pipe and line that has been laid in the city and can put his finger on a trouble spot from memory. In addition to maintenance work, he regularly checks all the city water meters.

A resident of Belleville since 1910 when he left his father's farm, the official remembers when there wasn't any water department in the city or for that matter paved streets or sidewalks.

"Belleville was just becoming a village when I got a job clerking in a grocery store. The town still looked pretty big next to my father's farm."

The streets in the early 1900's were nothing but dirt paths, he said. In the summer they became dust bowls and in spring turned into quagmires of mud. Water was drawn from individual wells, and horses were the rule on the village streets.

"I hate to brag," Atyeo smiles, "But things started picking up when my uncle, William A. Atyeo, was elected first mayor of the Village of Belleville. Uncle Bill was a real go-getter."

Strangely enough, Mr. Atyeo said that Belleville was behind the farming areas in many cases.

"The first automobile I ever saw was owned by a neighbor of my father's. He had a 1898 Buick 'Brush' before anyone in Belleville would have considered buying one of those snorters. So you can never run down the farming areas — they're pretty progressive."

In 1917 Atyeo got a job with the old Detroit Creamery Co. in the receiving station at Belleville. At that time, the dairy business was in full swing in the area, he said.

"We used to collect as much as \$10,000 worth of milk for one shipment to Detroit. But in the late 1920's things started to slow down and the depression killed off the dairy business completely. After 15 years with the company, I was out of a job when the station was closed down."

Then he took the job with the city and has remained ever since.

Mr. Atyeo lives with his wife at 257 Church St. He has lived in the same house for the last 47 years and says he plans to live there for the next 47.

When asked if he has any plans for retiring, he looked past a pipe he was repairing and leaned forward. "Not a chance. Retirement isn't for me—that's for old people," he said.



Young (right) and New York's Andy Bathgate (background) after the two players engaged in a fight. Detroit won, 6-1. (UPI Telephoto)

Doesn't show his age goals in 6-1 victory

troit Red Wings into title contention.

Howe, who will be 35 a month from today, continues to show the younger fellows in the league just how it's done. The powerful right winger scored twice and contributed a picture-book assist in the Wings' 6-1 lacing of the Rangers in New York Wednesday night.

The victory, in the only game played, enabled Detroit to move to within three points of Toronto and Montreal, tied for second, and five points of league-leading Chicago. The fourth-place Wings also

pulled away from the fifth-place Rangers, opening up a 16-point bulge over New York.

Howe, a four-time scoring leader, collected three points, giving him 49 for the season. This placed him just one point behind the co-leaders, Frank Mahovlich of Toronto and Johnny Bucyk of Boston.

Parker MacDonald also scored twice for Detroit, with Norm Ullman and Val Fonteyne adding single tallies. Larry Cahan ruined Hank Bassen's bid for a shutout with New York's only goal in the second period.

Lorne (Gump) Worsley kicked out 50 Detroit shots as compared to 32 saves by Bassen in the Be-

otters fight mission rule

contend that indication led to substantial financial investments in the Northville track. The trotting association has a sub-lease on the track.

Association officials contend in the brief that they have been suffering financial losses at the Jackson Fairgrounds. Other reasons cited in support of their proposed move are inadequate facilities and a high incidence of infectious diseases among horses at the Jackson track, plus a mounting attendance of Detroit-area residents.

The brief charges that Hayes previously turned down their request for a similar move in 1961 but that legal action proposed then was withheld when the racing head indicated he would give the matter more serious consideration before the 1963 season.

It states that Hayes indicated in June, 1962, that the financial investments in Northville would be justified, followed by a written opinion last fall that the request would be granted.

The trotting association is represented by Kenneth B. Johnson and Alvin G. Dahlem, Jackson attorneys.

Wilt does scoring, but Boston wins

BOSTON (AP) — It was pretty much the same old story: Big Wilt did the scoring and the Boston Celtics did the winning.

San Francisco's Wilt Chamberlain and Boston's Bill Russell, the top offensive and defensive players in the National Basketball As-